

## The Artistic Values of the Csongrád Saint Roch Church

The interior and exterior construction and decoration of the church in the Belsőváros (Inner Town) district of Csongrád have undergone considerable changes over the centuries.

Important information regarding the original design can be found in the protocol of the 1726 visitation.<sup>1</sup> The sanctuary and the sacristy, similarly to their current state, were vaulted and the nave ceiling was flat. The earlier furnishing presumably consisted of a wooden gallery, pews and a pulpit painted green and other colors. The altars, the main altar of the church and the two side altars – without the painting and the gilding – were already there by that time. The altarpiece on the main altar structure that is still standing



depicted the Assumption of Mary, the patron of the church. The layout was, apart from some minor differences, mostly the same as its current state. The Gospel side altar was dedicated to the Hungarian king Saint Stephen and its structure was similar to that of the main altar. In the centre of the lower area stood a statue of Saint Stephen, with the statues of Saint Ladislaus and Saint Emmerich on either side. Above them, probably on top of the volutes on either side of the pediment, were statues of Saint Catherine and Saint Barbara, and in the pediment between them stood statues of the Holy Trinity and Virgin Mary. The side-altar on the Epistle side had not been finished by then, however its titular saint, Saint Emmerich had already been chosen.

The altars were probably provided by Sándor Károlyi, as one of the sources mentions that his bailiff paid the last instalment of the artist's fees in November 1723.<sup>2</sup>

The planned Saint Emmerich side-altar was never built. Instead, Mihály Linkner, Sándor Károlyi's overseer and the notary of Szatmár County ordered the construction of a votive altar dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The altar is first mentioned in the church inventory of the year 1735.<sup>3</sup> The coat of arms of the benefactor placed on the altar pediment can be of help in determining the date of construction. Since Linkner attained the rank of nobility and his coat of arms only in 1732<sup>4</sup>, the altar could only be built after that, between 1732 and 1735.

The external appearance of the church, the design of its façades also differed slightly from their current condition. The building had two





entrances. The stone-framed main entrance, just like today, opened on the west side, and, in the absence of a tower, it was attached directly to the wall of the nave. The other entrance, of similar design, opened in the axis of the southern wall, but it was walled up during the construction of the Lourdes Cave. Due to the absence of a tower, and the wooden belfry that stood beside it as a substitute, the church had a completely different appearance from that of today.

Following the construction of the Church of Our Lady in the district known as Külsőváros (Outer Town), as mentioned above, the Károlyi family stopped supporting the maintenance of the Belsőváros church, which was thus out of use for a period of time. The altars remained in place, but most probably the condition of the building suffered serious deterioration, because by the time of the bishop's canonical visitation in 1778,

it had become unsuitable for celebrating masses.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, it was the municipality that took up the cause of the Belsőváros church. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1781, the city council presented a proposal to the Diocese of Vác, asking it to allow monastic priests (who often visited Csongrád) to celebrate masses at least on feast days, as neither the old nor the ill could regularly visit the distant new church, while muddy roads in times of bad weather conditions also kept other people from attending church services.<sup>6</sup> Details of the outcome are unknown, but it can be assumed that the building was put into permanent service only after the demolition of the Saint Roch Chapel in 1784, when it was given the title of the former chapel and its former altarpiece depicting Saint Roch.

This change affected the general layout of the church as well. The Saint Roch altarpiece replaced the painting of the Assumption of Mary



on the main altar and stood there until 1869, when it was again changed, this time to György Körrey's work, which is there to this day.<sup>7</sup> One year later, in 1870, Körrey made another painting of Saint Anne for the Gospel side altar.<sup>8</sup> The present altar structure, which, at the time of the 1745 canonical visitation, still conserved its original design, was first remodelled probably in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, on the occasion of the first change of title.<sup>9</sup> Both statues of royal saints standing on either side of the altarpiece, along with the representation of the Holy Trinity completed with a tower-carving alluding to the Virgin Mary could have come from the altar that was made shortly after the church was finished. However, the flaming urns decorated with late Baroque (Copf) festoons and angled handles decorating the pediment were probably added at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – either at the same time as the altarpiece or when it was renovated.

Of the two Baroque altarpieces replaced by the pictures of György Körrey, we know only the former main altarpiece. This was restored and re-



painted – although not very professionally – at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At present, it hangs beside the entrance to the sacristy. An inventory from 1885 lists a large painting depicting Saint Stephen hanging on the wall.<sup>10</sup> There is no data available from later years about that painting or about the statues of Saint Peter and Saint Paul mentioned in the protocols of 18<sup>th</sup> century parish visitations. The latter statues stood on either side of the main altar, where the statues of the female saints are to be found now.

After the change of title of the church, both its internal and external appearance was transformed. The most important change was caused by the construction of the tower (1818), which presumably came with the renovation of the façade and making them coherent in design. The first full renovation took place thanks to the donation of a sum of more than 3,000 florins from the curator József Gulyás in 1884. The church was given a new shingled roof, its tower a new tin steeple, the walls were repainted inside and the altars were renovated, too. According to the *Historia Domus*, the already mentioned Baroque altarpieces of Saint Stephen and the Virgin Mary were also “painted over”.<sup>11</sup> In 1885, a cross was installed solemnly on the new tower steeple.<sup>12</sup> In the same year, thanks to the churchgoers’ contributions the ‘wheezing’ organ was renovated and enlarged, and, for it to be properly installed, an organ loft with iron columns was built, too.<sup>13</sup> The construction of the pulpit was ordered in 1891 by István Gyöngyösi Szabó and Anna Tari on the occasion of their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.<sup>14</sup> In 1894, the structure of the main altar was repainted<sup>15</sup>, then, in 1896 also that of the two side altars.<sup>16</sup> The church was renovated again in 1895, this time new pews were installed and the plastering on the façade was also restored.<sup>17</sup> In 1915, the town’s representative body paid some 20,000 kronas for the full renovation of the building. As part of the construction works, the church was given slate roofing, the full surface of the walls was plastered, and the ceiling of the nave was also



rebuilt. The artists Ferenc Lohr and Lajos Tary, who had then just finished their murals in the Church of Our Lady, were commissioned with the work of painting the ceiling. The present organ of the church was also purchased at that time from the Angster organ factory in Pécs.<sup>18</sup> By 1946, as a result of leaking on the ceiling, the frescoes were irreparable, therefore, following the renovation of the ceiling and the plastering, in 1947, artists Antal Borsa and György Endrédy decorated the ceiling with two large paintings and the walls with Baroque-style ornamentation and marbling.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, we can say that the nave, the sanctuary and the sacristy of the church were built in 1723, and the construction of the tower began in 1818. The structure of the main altar was finished by 1726 at the latest, while the votive altar donated by Mihály Linkner was completed between 1732 and 1735. The predecessor of the Gospel side altar could have been built at the same time as the main altar, while, according to contemporary records, followed the structure of the latter. The first rebuilding of the church can probably be linked to the change of its title in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1870, the church received a new altarpiece, and, presumably it was at that time or at the end of the century that the urn decorations and volutes now located over the main cornice were added. The earlier painting of the main altar that depicted the Assumption of



the Virgin Mary has been replaced with a picture from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The structure of the altar, however, has remained mostly unaltered, while, just like the side altars, it has been repainted multiple times. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new pulpit and an organ loft were added to the furniture of the church. At the beginning of the last century, the ceiling of the nave was replaced by one made of concrete, which, along with the walls, was decorated with murals and decorative painting most recently in 1947.

## The floorplan and the façade design of the church

The Saint Roch Church has rectangular undivided nave which is connected to the lengthened sanctuary closing with the three sides of an octagon, the tower with a square base, jutting out of the façade in front of the main entrance and a sacristy on the northern side of the sanctuary. The longitudinal axis has an orientation of northeast-southwest (the axis of the nave has a deviation of 32 degrees to the north from the west-east direction). It is built of brick, has a pitched roof half-

hipped over the sanctuary. A footing and a one-piece cornice runs around the building.

In the axis of the main façade of the church, there is a tower which includes the main entrance, and on either side there is a side entrance: the one on the side of the Tisza leads to the organ loft and the other is walled from the inside. In spite of being a later addition, the tower fits organically into the nave, its design and structure is adapted to that of the façades. The tower has



three floors. The lower section, reaching up to the line of the cornice of the church building, is divided by the main entrance and, above, by the semicircle window with louvers at the level of the organ loft. The middle section decorated with stripes in the plastering has a small circular window, while the upper section mounted above the roof and equipped with a clock and closed by a clock cornice has four arched bell windows. The tower is topped by a broached spire of wooden structure, clad in copper with a tower ball. On its two sides, the tower is connected to the nave by a triangular pediment, and the statues of Saint Joseph and Saint Roch stand on its edges.<sup>20</sup>

The stripes on the plastering of the lateral façades of the nave create three axes. The Tisza-side is divided only by a single window with semi-circular closing in the central axis. The side facing Kerekárok Street is much more segmented. At each axis, a window breaks the wall, under them, there are circular windows on the two side axes, while on the middle axis a stone framed entrance was made. The latter was walled during the construction of the Lourdes Cave.

The sanctuary gets the light from three windows with semicircular closing. The sacristy attached to it has a mono-pitched roof, and its entrance opens from the side of the river Tisza.

## Interior and furnishing

Coming through the main entrance, the visitor enters a lobby, from where they can enter the church through a carved stone doorway. There is a flat ceiling above the nave and a ribbed quarter-dome above the sanctuary. On the entrance side stands the organ loft on cast iron columns with gracious, Corinthian capitals with the organ made at József

Angster and Son's Organ and Harmonium Factory in Pécs. The most valuable items of furniture in Saint Roch church are the main altar in the sanctuary and the two side altars standing in front of the chancel arch on either side of the nave.

The structure of the main altar takes up the whole space between the two windows of the







sanctuary walls. The altar structure rises above a fitted table (stipes). On the mensa, there is a tabernacle with an adoring pair of angels and articulated on either side by tiny columns with gilded capitals. Its door is decorated with representations of the chalice and the Host referring to the Eucharist. The arched retable is bordered with spiral consoles, on which, framing the altarpiece, there are the statues of Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislaus. Saint Stephen is wearing a Hungarian garment with Hungarian knots and above it a royal cloak and on his head the Holy Crown. In his left hand, he is holding the orb and in the right hand the sceptre. Facing him, in a similarly bent posture, we can see Saint Ladislaus wearing armour and a royal cloak above it, with a crown decorated with crosses on his head. He is holding a battle axe and the sceptre. According to the protocols of the visitations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, statues of the Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul once stood beside the statues of kings. They were replaced by two statues of crowned female saints without attributes.

The retable of the altar is divided by two marble-painted and gilded columns and four similarly decorated lisenés, which enclose a broken arch-shaped picture frame and hold an emphasized and articulated cornice. The altarpiece represents the patron of the church, Saint Roch, one of the most important patron saints offering protection against the plague. The saint can be seen wearing a pilgrim's robe, in front of a natural background, kneeling, raising his eyes to the sky, while leaning on a pilgrim's staff. On his chest, he has a crucifix and a shell of Saint James. His broad-brimmed hat is lying on the ground, and in front of him a dog appears with a piece of bread in its mouth. The picture was painted by György Körösy in 1869.<sup>21</sup>

Above the cornice of the altar is a pediment with a volute on either side. Its field is filled with a Holy Trinity composition arranged around a globe symbolizing the whole of the universe together with clouds, angel heads and beams of light. On top of the volutes connected to the main cornice, on the left, there is a statue of Saint Barbara holding a chalice, on the right a smaller statue



of Saint Catherine holding a palm leaf and a book. On the main cornice and on the top edges of the pediment a pair of puttos can be seen. The top of the gable is decorated with a figure of the archangel Saint Michael triumphant over the devil.

The former altarpiece that represents the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, is to be found beside the entrance to the sacristy. Mary can be seen standing on clouds with a wreath of stars above her head, and above her figure we can see Christ, God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit shedding light over the whole composition. Mary turns her gaze to Heaven, rests her right hand in her son's hand, who carries the wounds from the crucifixion on his feet and his side. Angels and puttos surround them, one of whom is bearing the cross of Christ while the others hold lilies and roses that refer to the immaculateness of Mary. In 1885, the picture was repainted by a painter named Hegedűs thanks to a donation from József Gulyás, as the text at the bottom reads (*The first altarpiece of the old church. József Gulyás. Hegedűs 1885*).

There is a side altar on either side of the chancel arch. The side altar at the meeting point of the sanctuary and the nave was probably made in the same workshop as the main altar. It is dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin Mary. The altar is erected on a high, plastered and whitewashed brick base, over a slightly arched retable. It is decorated with marbled paintwork, gilding in certain places and its edges with decorative carved leaf ornaments. The central section is taken up by a carved relief representing the Virgin Mary enclosed by a narrow frame-like rim, which imitates that of an altarpiece. The Virgin Mother can be seen under a canopy, kneeling on a cloud, slightly turning to the side. Her hands are clasped in prayer and she is wearing a crown. Her figure is framed by loose folds of drapery hanging from the canopy and tied up on the sides. The arrangement of the composition emphasizes Mary's role as intercessor and protector. There are statues of Saint Barbara and another, unknown female saint on either side. On the cornice of the altar that rests on two





pairs of lisenés and columns, the coat of arms of the donor can be seen with a band below with the text: "Ex voto Michaelis Linkner".

The altar ends in an arched pediment enclosed by volutes turning inward. On the edges, above the volutes and the cornice, a seated putto and an urn with flame and garlands can be seen on either side. The figure of the Father, represented as an elderly man sitting on a throne of clouds with a triangular halo above his head and resting his hand on the globe, fills the whole space of the pediment. Above his head, on the cornice of the gable the Holy Spirit also appears in the form of a dove surrounded by a halo similarly to the Father. The craftsman carving the altar did not depict God the Son. This was not necessary, since according to the Christian concept, as the invocation of the Loretto litany ("Vessel of honour") puts it, Mary was the carrier of Christ's body, herself a living tabernacle.

The patron of the Gospel side altar is Saint Anne. The present altarpiece representing her was painted by György Körrey and was installed on the Baroque structure in 1870. On the painting, Saint Anne can be seen as she is teaching the child Mary to read from the Old Testament. In the background of the genre-like scene a detail of the landscape unfolds from behind the columned porch, while, in the sky, two puttos can be seen. On the lower part, there is an etched inscription with the name of the painter and the date. Its idyllic, somewhat mawkish manner and compositional arrangement is reminiscent of another one of Körrey's Saint Anne altarpieces, made a few years earlier for the John the Baptist Church of Kiskundorozsma.

The painting is enclosed by a Baroque frame decorated with dynamically twining tendrils. The frame served formerly as a frame for another, unknown altarpiece. The wooden retable is decorated with marbling and, at certain places, gilding. On either side of the altarpiece is a column with a composite capital, and beside them, on the left, is the statue of Saint Ladislaus and, on the right, that of Saint Stephen, both standing on spirally twisted

consoles. The structure of the altar ends in a wide, slightly overhanging cornice. On the pediment, there is a cloud-wreathed representation of the Holy Trinity, where a dove symbolising the Holy Spirit appears above the figures of the Father and the Son sitting on clouds. On the lower section of the pediment, there is a tower referring to Mary who also appears on the altarpiece. This alludes to the invocations of the "Tower of David" and the "Tower of Ivory" of the Loretto Litany.<sup>22</sup> The composition is enclosed on either side by volutes with urns in front of them in line with the columns.

The structure of the altar could have been built in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but it is possible that some parts of it come from its predecessor already completed by 1726, which was dedicated to Saint Stephen and was larger in size and richer in ornamentation. Therefore, the statues of Saint Ladislaus and Saint Stephen might be the same as those that were placed on the lower section of the altar along with the statue of Saint Emmerich. The composition of the Holy Spirit on the pediment was also a part of the former altar structure. The tower might also be a fragment of the portrayal of the Virgin Mary mentioned in the visitations at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup>

At present, the statues of the altar are painted with a thick layer of oil paint, the columns and the cornices have brownish marbling, while the different carved ornaments are decorated with gold-coloured paint. In some of the openings made during the recent restoration for the purpose of revealing the older layers of painting, a much softer, mainly red, green and golden layer of original paint can be seen.

The altars could have been repainted in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pulpit, built in the same period, is covered in characteristic, brownish-red marbling, just like the postaments of the statues of the Heart of Jesus and Saint Anthony. The modest, but attractively carved, brown pews were made in 1895, around the time when the wardrobes of the sacristy used for storing vestments and ecclesiastical items were purchased.



## Decorative painting in the church

The murals decorating the ceiling and the painted ornaments on the walls of the nave and the sanctuary contribute greatly to the overall impression of the church interior.

The decorative painting of the church was done in 1947 as part of the preparations for the Tisza Marian Days and the related church renovation by Antal Borsa [Schutzbach] (1902–1974) and György Endrédy (1910–1988).

Probably, it was the applied artist Antal Borsa who did the decorative paintings.<sup>24</sup> Borsa painted

sanctuary side represents the Virgin Mother as she appears to the navy and fishermen of Csongrád. The scene takes place by one of the banks of the Holt-Tisza (a backwater of the river). In the background, the river Tisza can be seen with the Church of Our Lady on the far bank. Mary, with the infant Jesus on her lap, appears among dark clouds. They are standing in glowing light and reach out their hands in blessing. Beside them, turning its back to the spectator, an angel can be seen, and two curious puttos peeking from under the drapery of her



the walls and the ceiling sand-colored. He divided up the walls of the chancel arch and the sanctuary applying brownish-pink, marbling interspersed with white tendril and leaf motives that are a good match for the Baroque furnishing and arrangement.<sup>25</sup> As a signature, he painted some key instruments of his work, a paint can, a paintbrush and his glasses, beside the balustrade of the organ loft, above the cornice.

Decorative borders have been painted around the murals on the ceiling, too. The mural on the

dress. One of them is wearing glasses. Down below, by the riverside, a group of workers is gathering. Most of them have already noticed the miracle and stopped working to raise their gazes to the Virgin Mary. One man, seemingly tired, is leaning on his shovel. The picture gives the impression of spontaneity, which is further enhanced by a figure in the foreground, who is still moving, pushing the fully packed wheelbarrow with tense muscles, while a little further on other fishermen are going on with their job uninterrupted.



Close to the scene, on the north and south side of the chancel arch, the first lines of the well known Marian Hymn can be seen: “Holy Mother, our patron of old. In the midst of need, our country calls to you: / Do not forget Hungary, our dear home, do not forget the poor people of Hungary.” In fact, the prayer can be read along with the scene next to it, thus the prayer together with the painting expresses the wish for the grace experienced in Csongrád to be extended to the entire country.

A picture, corresponding to this one, is to be found on the organ side of the ceiling. It represents Jesus as he appears among the people gathered in front of the entrance of the Saint Roch Church. The audience, men and women, old and young listen carefully to the Saviour, who turns to

them with outspread arms. The group of men on the left might have just arrived from the harvest, one of them holding a sheaf of wheat on one of his shoulders, and the other one a threshing flail.

The two pictures represent the love of the people of Csongrád for the Virgin Mary and the Saviour. This devoted love never ceases despite the hardships of their everyday life spent in toil. The churches in the background, which were built with hard effort and under the protective support of Mary and Jesus, are the result of this religious fervour.

The painted decoration of the church gives solemnity to the space that is lit by the light filtered through the coloured glass windows and by the chandelier made in 1897 in the workshop of Henrik Giergl purchased from public donations.<sup>26</sup>

## The fittings of the church. Bells, treasures, textiles

From its early history, Csongrád's former parish church was always equipped properly with the essential liturgical accessories, vestments, various liturgical textiles, treasures and bells. It had, according to visitation accounts, a significant amount of ecclesiastical items right after the building was finished. However, none of these have come down to us. Most of the present ecclesiastical items were purchased from the donations of the churchgoers in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Its set of liturgical fittings was probably based on the assets of the old Saint Stephen Church according to a record from 1716. Apart from the various, easily deteriorating liturgical textiles, the record includes in its list a gilded silver chalice, a silver paten, a gilded monstrance and ciborium made of copper, two smaller and one bigger bell and liturgical books.<sup>27</sup> The same types of items are mentioned in the first known inventory of the present church (1726).<sup>28</sup> Although the composition of the two inventories could have changed during those ten years, many of the matching items suggest that the new church may have re-

ceived several objects from the old building. For instance, the volume containing Péter Pázmány's sermons (*Conciones Pazmani Dominicalis*) mentioned in the later inventory, too, can be the same as the item listed in the earlier record.<sup>29</sup> The chasuble that the inventory described as ‘old’ might have also come from the former church.

Gradually, the church acquired more and more assets. In 1735, among its fixtures, there were two gilded silver chalices with paten, one gilded copper ciborium with a top and a monstrance of the same kind. There was no shortage of vestments and liturgical textiles either. The inventory of the church lists, among other things, three new and two old chasubles with matching stole and maniple, four albs, six humeral veils, three surplices (*superpelliceum*), two pluvials, three veils, six kerchiefs, fourteen altar cloths and eight banners of different colours: one green, depicting Mary's Assumption and Saint Joseph, one red with the figures of Saint John the Baptist and bishop Saint Adalbert, two red ones with Saint Ladislaus, Saint Roch, Saint Sebastian and Saint Rosalia, two smaller green pieces with the Virgin Mother



and Saint Joseph, a smaller green one with Saint Francis Seraphic and a black banner. The inventory describes some of the textiles as old. Another fact of interest is that in the church there was an embroidery representing the Virgin Mary seated on her throne. At that time the church also had an organ of six mutations and a baptismal font. There is a possibility that the three bells listed in the inventory were from the old church, which was also reported to have had the same number. According to the document, the bigger one was dedicated to the Assumption of Mary and one of the smaller ones to Saint Stephen. The third one is described as old and its title is not known.<sup>30</sup>

In 1761, three silver chalices were taken into account, and it seems that by that time the copper ciborium was replaced by one made of silver. The number of liturgical textiles increased as well: six chasubles were reported, one of which was labelled exceptionally valuable. The number of bells had reached five, and an organ of four mutations is listed instead of the one of six.<sup>31</sup>

After the dedication of the Külsőváros church (1769), the Belsőváros church became almost empty. The 1778 visitation mentions only the

three altars, and remarks that there are no ecclesiastical items there. By contrast, the new church is provided remarkably well with paraments: for instance, it had three silver chalices and another two, and there were seven bells in the temporary belfry built next to the church.<sup>32</sup> It is not possible to deduce from the itemised yet completely undetailed accounts exactly what items were taken from the old church to the new one. Therefore, it is also impossible to assess whether the collection of the Church of Our Lady has any items coming from there. At most, only the precious metal items could have survived the past more than two centuries, the textiles may have worn out.

Some particular items were probably returned to their original place after the Belsőváros church came into use again, that is, after 1785. Thus it happened that in 1827 fewer treasures were listed than in 1778, while in the Saint Roch Church, where there were no items of precious metal, in 1827 a silver and a copper chalice, two silver patens, a silver ciborium, a gilded copper monstrance, a pewter crucifix and a silver pyx were reported to be in use. These items were also found in an inventory from 1875, what happened to them af-





ter that is unknown.<sup>33</sup> The collection of treasures of the Belsőváros church was enriched later, too. The *Historia Domus* records that in 1885 József Gulyás had brought a new ornate monstrance and a white silk veil.<sup>34</sup>

Of the items from the 18<sup>th</sup> century collection of the church, only one bell is known, the one that is still in the tower today. According to the inscription, the town of Csongrád had it made in Buda by the bell founder József Brunner in 1793.<sup>35</sup> On its waist, a representation of Saint Roch can be seen, on the head the inscription: *GOSS MICH IOSEPH BRUNNER IN OFEN 1793* (Brunner József cast me in Buda in 1793) and, below the figure of Saint Roch: *IN HONOREM ST ROCHI COMUNITAS CSONGRADIENSIS CURAVIT 1793* (Ordered by the parish of Csongrád, dedicated to Saint Roch in 1793).<sup>36</sup>

The other three bells were taken in account by the 1885 inventory of the church, then again, in 1917 at the occasion of their requisition for military purposes by the priest, Károly Thury.<sup>37</sup> All three bells were melted down. One of them was made in 1825 by Henrik Eberhardt in Budapest. Its shoulder was decorated with reliefs of Saint Anne, bishop Saint Nicholas, Saint Sebastian and Saint Florian. The inscription reads: *FUDIT HENRICUS EBERHARDT, PESTINI 1825*.<sup>38</sup> The other, smaller bell, according to its inscription, was ordered by the people of Csongrád in 1874: *CSONGRÁD VÁROS KÖZÖNSÉGE NEVÉBEN CSONGRÁD VÁROS RENDEZETT TANÁCSÚ HATÓSÁGA 1874* [In the name of the people of the City of Csongrád, the Council Authority of the City of Csongrád 1874].<sup>39</sup> Popular belief held that the third bell was pulled out of the river Körös by fishermen.<sup>40</sup> It was cast by György Weir in Eperjes [Prešov, Slovakia] in 1632. The inscription reads: *MAR IHS GOSSE MICH ANNO MDCXXXII GEORG WIERD IN EPPERIES*.<sup>41</sup> It was recast in 1913 in Antal Novotny's workshop, in Temesvár [Timișoara, Romania].<sup>42</sup> The 1825 sources mention a large bell (5 quintals and 16 pounds,

that is approx. 370 kg) that had recently been dedicated to Saint Roch.<sup>43</sup>

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century on, the collection of the church was enriched due to the contributions of the parish members. The majority of the items became the property of the church in the last two centuries. In most of the cases, vestments, different liturgical textiles, banners were offered, while the other fixtures were purchased from donations received at collection events.

The banners were used at processions and funerals. They could have been ordered by private individuals, religious societies and guilds as well. These items were usually purchased through specialised firms in Budapest (Szűcs and Co; Kriszta and Leitner).

The sources from 1827 mention four banners, while those from 1875 report eight. Two of them, with the cross of the Saviour and the representation of the Assumption of Mary, were ordered by the Society of the Rosary in 1875.<sup>44</sup> The society called 'The Shepherd and the Herdsmen' also had a green church banner since 1881.<sup>45</sup> The collection box attached to one of the rear pews, with a circular relief representing Saint Wendelin must also be associated with this society.<sup>46</sup>

Among private individuals, the so-called 'rosary banners', depicting the Virgin Mary with a rosary must have been particularly popular. In 1894–1895 the sources record a donation of four blue banners of this kind. Two of them were given to the church by Belsőváros ladies.<sup>47</sup>

The black banners were used at funerals and they wore out quickly. In 1896, parish priest Antal Hegyi collected donations, and then purchased a camelhair-damask banner from the money he received.<sup>48</sup>

The textiles, vestments and ornate altar covers were taken care of by the parish members as well as the Altar Society. The 1875 church inventory lists five chasubles, the same number of stoles and cingula (belts for priests), 3 black and one golden pluvials, one velum, 9 albs, 14 humerals, 5 surplices (superpelliceum), 12 corporales, 5 palls, 40





purificators, 5 manutergia, 8 altar covers, 3 altar covers (mappa) and 4 vestments for ministrants.<sup>49</sup> In 1884, three vestments were bought from the donations, made of white and red brocade fabric and violet-coloured atlas fabric.<sup>50</sup>

Donations continued to be made in the last century too. In 1946, the church received statues

of the Holy Sepulchre and Saint Anthony as a contribution from the churchgoers.<sup>51</sup> The procession cross may have also been purchased in the first half of the century. Most of the covers and cloths of different sizes and embroideries were made by skilful local women.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> This entry in the record and the unified arrangement of the building disprove the views that the current church is the result of the reconstruction of a previous building.
- <sup>2</sup> MNL OL, P 398. 709773. 70878.
- <sup>3</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1735.
- <sup>4</sup> Áldásy 1939. 139.
- <sup>5</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 7. 1778.
- <sup>6</sup> MNL OL, P 398, 11538.
- <sup>7</sup> The altarpiece was paid for from a donation of 100 Hungarian florins by Mrs. Márton Gulyás (née: Rozália Kállai). See: NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 108; NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885.

- <sup>8</sup> Mrs. János Tari (née: Veronika Forgó) had it painted. She also had the whole church whitewashed and donated a black chasuble. See: NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885; NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 110.
- <sup>9</sup> The altar, which had the title of Saint Stephen at the time of the 1745 visitation, appears to have the title of Saint Francis in the record of the 1761 visitation. The exact date and the circumstances of the change of title are unknown. Cf. descriptions of the altar set-up in the years 1745 [VPL LVis. Liber 4.] and 1761 [VPL LVis. Liber 6].



- <sup>10</sup> NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885.
- <sup>11</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 117.
- <sup>12</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 117.
- <sup>13</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 118.
- <sup>14</sup> NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885. There is also a reference on the inscription of the memorial tablet placed on the pulpit.
- <sup>15</sup> The painter who did the work was paid 100 Hungarian florins. *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 19 August 1894, Vol. I, No. 23, p. 3.
- <sup>16</sup> The “cleaning” costs of the two side altars were donated by István Gyöngyösi Szabó and his wife Anna Tari. *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 31 May 1896, Vol. III, No. 22, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 30 July 1895 Vol. II, No. 30, p. 2–3.
- <sup>18</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 23.
- <sup>19</sup> Dudás 2000b. 106; NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 125.
- <sup>20</sup> According to Lajos Dudás, the northern stone statue is that of Saint Roch, while the southern one is that of Saint Christopher. Dudás 2000b. 69.
- <sup>21</sup> György Körrey was born in 1818 in Palarikovo, Nitra County, Slovakia. István Károlyi paid for his studies first in Pest with József Pesky and later in the Academy of Vienna. After he finished his studies in Vienna, he lived in Budapest, and worked mainly for churches in the countryside first from Pesky’s workshop, then independently. Lyka 1981. 131; 137; 150. In Csongrád, he painted the pictures of the Saint Roch main altar (1869) and the Saint Anne side altar of the Belsőváros church as well as the previous picture of the main altar depicting the Assumption of the Virgin Mary of the Church of Our Lady (1872) and the current picture of the Saint Anne side altar (1867). Regarding the altarpieces of the Church of Our Lady, see: NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 107; VPL APar. Cs. 1872. The current main altarpiece of the parish church was painted by local art teacher Ferenc Vannay in 1894 along the lines of the main altarpiece of the Esztergom Basilica. See: *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 1 July 1894, Vol. I, No. 16, p. 1–2.
- <sup>22</sup> Bálint 1998. 199.
- <sup>23</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 3; VPL LVis. Liber 4. 1745.
- <sup>24</sup> Antal Borsa was born as Antal Schutzbach in 1902 in Győr. After secondary school, he studied at the College of Applied Arts in Budapest and graduated in 1925. He started out as the co-owner of a decorative painting and interior design company, then he got commissions mainly in the territory of the Diocese of Győr. His name is linked to the painting, decoration and renovation of many churches. Biczó–Grászli 2012. 5–9.
- <sup>25</sup> He used a similar marble-effect wall painting in the church of Kunsziget in 1957.
- <sup>26</sup> *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 17 January 1897 Vol. IV, No. 3. p. 3.
- <sup>27</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 3. 92–94.
- <sup>28</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 3. 400–401. 1726.
- <sup>29</sup> It might be identical to Péter Pázmány’s work titled “Sermons on the Gospels ordered by the Holy Roman Mother Church for each Sunday and some Feast Days”, which was first published in 1636 in Bratislava.
- <sup>30</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1735.
- <sup>31</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 6. 26–29 June 1761. 37–38.
- <sup>32</sup> VPL LVis. Liber 7. 1778.
- <sup>33</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1875.
- <sup>34</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 118.
- <sup>35</sup> The bell is mentioned in the record of the 1842 church visitation as well as the 1885 church inventory. Both sources indicate 1723 as the year the bell was made. Cf. VPL LVis. Liber 17. 154.
- <sup>36</sup> The bell is listed in the 1885 archives of the Saint Roch Church. See: NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885; Patay 1977. 19.
- <sup>37</sup> NPI Inventory of the Saint Roch Church, 1885; NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 26–27.
- <sup>38</sup> Weight 286 kg, diameter 84 cm, height 72.5 cm. NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 26. In: Dudás–Kőhegyi 2000. 390.
- <sup>39</sup> Weight 24 kg, diameter 35 cm, height 30 cm. NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 27. In: Dudás–Kőhegyi 2000. 390.
- <sup>40</sup> Patay considers this a folk legend. Patay 1963. 34–35.
- <sup>41</sup> According to Pál Patay. See: Patay 1989. 60; The 1842 church visitation mentions only the second half of the inscription: MDCXXXII GEORG WIERD IN EP-ERIES; It is inaccurately entered in the 1885 inventory; VPL LVis. Liber 17. 154.
- <sup>42</sup> Weight 53 kg, diameter 47 cm, height 40 cm. NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 26–27.
- <sup>43</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1827.
- <sup>44</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1875.
- <sup>45</sup> Gyöngyössi 2014. 38.
- <sup>46</sup> For more details, see: Gyöngyössi 2011.
- <sup>47</sup> *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 1 July 1894, Vol I, No. 16, p. 1–2; *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 6 October 1895, Vol. II, No. 40, p. 4.
- <sup>48</sup> *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 20 September 1896, Vol. III, No. 38, p. 4.
- <sup>49</sup> VPL APar. Cs. 1875.
- <sup>50</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume I, 117.
- <sup>51</sup> NPI Historia Domus Volume II, 124.





Belvárosi templom.

Szilber János

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